

**2012 Adult Basic Education Competition Webinar  
Questions and Answers  
October 20, 2011  
10-11:30 a.m.**

**Q:** *Can an agency apply for funding for more than one region?*

**A:** Yes. However, the applicant would have to submit separate applications for each region, including regional three-year plans, one-year funding applications, and budget materials for each region.

**Q:** *So, if I am a Program Manager in District 6, does that mean between the others in the area such as in Augusta and Waynesboro, Harrisonburg, etc., only one of us will technically keep their position? Or will we be in the same positions but one will be the lead manager for entire region and we will then still be over our original regional areas?*

**A:** That is a decision for the agencies and entities that come together to plan and apply for that region. We would like to make one award to one lead agency in each region, but there could be multiple providers in each region. If several providers come together and Provider A is going to be the fiscal agent and hire the regional specialist and the regional manager, but Providers B, C, and D still plan to have services and staff on site, that is their decision to make. Our drive is to have a single point of contact who will be responsible for the outcomes in the region and will work with all providers and partners in that region.

**Q:** *If an MOU is required from each school division, doesn't that mean that the school divisions will essentially determine what agency is awarded the funds?*

**A:** No. The purpose of reviewing the state code was to explain that school divisions are required to provide adult education services. They are not required to apply for funding. They are not required to be lead agencies. They are not required to enter into MOUs if they don't see that as a benefit. There won't be, at least we expect there won't be, just one application per region. The purpose of competition is to have multiple applications from multiple eligible applicants and to award that application that reflects the strongest plan for service and for accountability and performance. It's very possible that school divisions may be involved in some applications and not in others. Additionally, the application, itself, will have to score highly enough on a scoring rubric to be fundable. If we receive only one application from a region and that application is unfundable, we will

either run a new competition for a provider in that region or we will negotiate with another successful applicant to provide service for that region.

**Q:** *Do we have to continue to maintain the local match at the current level or does the new competition reset the match to the required percentage?*

**A:** The new competition will reset the match level for all awarded applicants.

**Q:** *I am not sure what you mean by a region. Please try to break this down further.*

**A:** The regional format will be an administrative structure for adult education in Virginia. We will entertain applications from applicants to provide services in those regions. Applicants will have to have a three-year plan and a one-year application for funding that reflects service provision to satisfy the adult education need in the region. Those applications may come from individual entities or consortia of adult stakeholders and service providers. There will be a premium placed on and an expectation of partnerships that ensure that adult education students meet their goals, that programs meet their targets, and that adult education students are prepared to go on to further education and training.

**Q:** *Can you please consider increasing the page limits for ABE grant narratives and budget narratives to accommodate the information necessary to show a comprehensive picture of a regional program?*

**A:** As a general comment for current grantees, don't base expectations of the nature of the RFP or the nature of the regional plans on what has been done in the past. This is a new competition. The process and documents will look different and will expect different things than what we have put out in the past. It will be a unified application. You will be applying for a program as a whole, rather than individual funding streams in independent grant applications. It will take considerable space to provide a good application.

**Q:** *Am I to understand that everyone in a region may not be funded?*

**A:** Yes. This competition is among all eligible providers. They have access to the funds and are eligible to submit an application. In one region, the winning application could be a collection of school divisions. In another region it could be a consortium with a community college, a public library and school division and the public library could be the lead agency. In another region it could be a partnership of housing and community development, public library, and CBLO. It will be a competition among all eligible providers. The strongest application from each region will be awarded the funding. We do encourage partnerships among eligible providers because each has specific strengths that they bring to the table. Who receives what funds is up to the decisions and negotiations of the partners participating in the consortium. The current system doesn't necessarily reflect what the new system will be; it will likely look different.

**Q:** *Can two different CBLOs within the same region receive or win one of these grants?*

**A:** I would rephrase that to say could two different eligible applicants in the same region receive one of these grants? It is our intent and our plan is to issue one grant per region and those grants can fund multiple providers. No, it would not be possible for two applicants in one region to receive one of these grants. That doesn't mean that two CBLOs could not receive funding through a successful application, but the funding would be distributed through a single lead agency.

**Q:** *What is the funding source for regional managers and regional specialists?*

**A:** Those funds are state funds allocated by the General Assembly. Currently, they are general fund dollars so they don't have restrictions associated with lottery funds. The General Assembly is at liberty to fund its budget from lottery funds from year to year, program to program. Those have been general funds allocated by the General Assembly for the support of adult education and literacy services in Virginia. At the state level, we report those as match to obtain federal dollars. They can't be used in an application for the applicant's match and they are bound by the federal regulations related to GED testing and other allowable or unallowable activities.

**Q:** *Will only the lead agency enter the data into the NRS system?*

**A:** The lead agency will be responsible. The lead agency will be who we communicate with about the data. But it will be up to the lead agency and partners to determine the most effective way to enter the data to ensure the highest level of accuracy and timeliness. For a single entity to enter data may be challenging and cumbersome. It may not be as effective, but the lead agency and partners can make that determination.

**Q:** *Please clarify how the regional program specialist will be selected and funded.*

**A:** That will be at the discretion of the grantee. We will provide information about the duties and responsibilities of that specialist and what knowledge, skills, and abilities would be needed by the person to successfully fill that position. The Office of Adult Education and Literacy does not hire those positions. We provide guidance and expectations. The grantee would hire and employ that person using appropriate state and federal funds to pay their salary.

**Q:** *How does this affect the Race to GED and EL-Civics funds? Who can apply for those?*

**A:** The EL-Civics funds will continue to be issued as a separate grant application. It will be open to those that can apply for it now. It will not be merged into the ABE application for a wide variety of reasons. Race to GED funds are not used for match, because they

support GED testing, as well as instruction and outreach. Those Race to GED funds are currently lottery funds, so they must be issued to school division. However, that school division can contract out for services. If a lead agency in an application isn't a school division, but wishes to access to those funds, then that lead agency must partner with a school division that will receive those funds and use them to contract with the lead agency or expend the funds on behalf of the region. The only way this would change is if the General Assembly were to revert back to funding Race to GED out of general funds.

**Q:** *Would faith-based organizations be eligible providers?*

**A:** Yes. If there are non-profit, faith-based organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness of providing adult education or family literacy services, they are an eligible provider.

**Q:** *Can you clarify on the regions again? So our planning districts are split into twenty-two, and, of those, whoever applies and gets the grant will be in charge of the entire region correct? And then therefore grant applicants have to go and apply for the entire region?*

**A:** We hope to fund twenty-two grant applications, one in each of the original twenty-two planning districts. More information will be provided in the RFP. We are still writing the RFP. Applicants should expect to write three-year regional plans and one-year funding applications that will provide services to the entire region. An applicant has to provide services to the region, but it doesn't necessarily mean there will be service delivery spots in every county, city, town, etc. The plan and application should reflect what partnerships are in place, what space is available, and how are teachers and resources will be distributed to provide best service to those who have need in that region. Service areas will be clarified specifically in the RFP. Plan your application to incorporate those areas.

**Q:** *Will funding for full-time positions be a set amount for each region (similar to the current allocations for regional managers and regional specialists)?*

**A:** The current allocations are to fund a certain number of managers and specialists that are not covering the entire state. The expectation will be to use the regional manager and regional specialist funding and portions of the other appropriate funding streams (Race to GED, ABE, local/regional match, etc.) to fund a full-time manager and specialist in each region. The purpose is that we currently have a lot of program managers that oversee career and technical, alternative education, and special education, as well as adult education and the time they can allot to the performance and accountability of adult education is limited. We understand that and understand the fiscal pressures. We want to more equitably distribute our state funding so that the grantees will have enough funding and be able to leverage that funding in a region to have someone oversee adult education in a full-time manner.

**Q:** *Am I to understand that not as many ABE awards will be made as usual? I heard the statement that twenty-two awards will be made.*

**A:** Yes, that is correct. Our intention is to fund one grant per each of the original twenty-two planning district regions. However, as long as Virginia receives its federal award as usual, the same amount of ABE money will be available to the Commonwealth, and it will be allocated as it is now but using more up-to-date data. The allocations to the individual counties and cities will be done in the same manner, but they will be bundled in to twenty-two awards, one for each region.

**Q:** *Are you saying there will no longer be independent programs?*

**A:** No. Within a region there may be multiple providers. Example: An applicant is in a consortium of a community college, a couple of school divisions, and a CBLO. The community college, through an MOU, agrees to act as the lead agency. They receive \$350,000 for the region and the CBLO receives \$50,000 of that to provide one-on-one tutoring or very small classroom instruction for the lowest level literacy students. One of the school divisions wants to run a program within its own administration and have a coordinator to oversee that program. Through the MOU agreement, the community college, as the lead agency, allots them \$100,000 a year, and they run their program. The remainder of the funds the community college administers on behalf of the other school divisions and provides services in other parts of the region that are not being covered otherwise. There may be, within the regional format, multiple individual programs operating that are receiving funding through the lead agency to provide services. But, from an administrative stand point, in that example, the community college will be the lead agency, our point-of-contact, and the staff at the college would be responsible for financial management, reimbursements, ensuring that data is correct, program performance, etc.

**Q:** *So are you saying two CBLOs in the same region should apply together, not separately? How is it decided how for example how these two CBLOs would share the money? Who makes these decisions, is this creating more work for the ED of each agency for data reporting, etc., especially since they may be part-time staff?*

**A:** No. It's a competition. Everyone has access to this funding and is welcome to apply. There will be a premium placed on partnerships. That is nothing new. It's an expectation under federal law. We can't advise whether two CBLOs should apply separately or together. The eligible applicants in a region need to be in discussion about how to best address the needs of that region.

**Q:** *Will there be transparency as to who is applying?*

**A:** There will be transparency in the application process. All the funds will be available to all eligible applicants. There is no requirement that I know of in the law or state code to

issue a list of applicants, but it is public information. We would likely issue a list of recipients, of the grantees who are successful. There is one due date for all applicants, so unless we require a letter of intent, we won't know who is applying until applications are in.

**Q:** *May a Regional Literacy Coordinating Committee (RLCC) in a region submit an application for several partners? Or, explain what the status will be of a RLCC in the new system.*

**A:** The RLCCs are not service providers, but regional advisory groups, so they are not eligible applicants under the WIA. There will be little impact on them in this competition, except the number will likely increase from eighteen to twenty-two.

**Q:** *What is the effective date of the new funding, July or August 2012?*

**A:** Every year, the effective date of the ABE grants is July 1. The award likely won't be in hand July 1, but will be effective July 1. The federal funds are effective through June 30 of the following year. These dates will all be in the RFP.

**Q:** *Did I see that Fluvanna is with Thomas Jefferson (Charlottesville area) and not Cumberland Regional Adult Education? A written response not on webinar auditory will be appreciated. Thanks so much!*

**A:** We can't send written responses to each request, but Q&A will be posted next week. We encourage all who are interested to visit the Web site for the planning district commissions that they may be involved in. There are five counties that are shared in planning districts currently, but in the original 22 planning districts, along which this regional plan is based, those five localities were delegated to only one, and we will follow that format.

**Q:** *Will the data technician position need to be funded out of administrative or instructional funds?*

**A:** That depends on how it will be defined within the application. It can potentially be funded out of both. Most data technicians serve in a capacity on both the administrative and instructional sides. Some of their work is used for instruction, working with teachers, producing reports, analyzing data for teachers, etc., so that position could be funded out of both administrative and instructional funds.

**Q:** *Is the regional map currently available or do we need to wait until the webinar is posted?*

**A:** We created the map. It will be available when we post the webinar. It is a .jpg so you can extract and use it for other purposes.

**Q:** *If an LEA decides not to sign an MOU and therefore not to participate in the regional grant, are they still responsible to provide Adult Ed services with their own money? What happens to their allocated money?*

**A:** Local school boards are required under code to provide adult education services to those individuals who need such services. However, they may do this on their own or through partnerships with other divisions or agencies/organizations that provide such services. If a division chooses not to compete in this competition, then this office has no authority over that division. Their provision of adult education services would then be an issue between the local school board and the state Board of Education. There is precedent for that. There are two school divisions now that choose not to apply for the state and local funds that are allocated to their areas, and they provide adult education services on their own. The expectation is that in the annual reports they file with the state board, those local school boards address their adult education activities. The federal and supporting funds are awarded to the successful applicants. The federal ABE funds are allocated to the localities for those who are in need of adult education services, not to the school divisions. The school divisions are one of many eligible applicants.

**Q:** *Will Race to GED and GAE grants be awarded to the region or individual localities?*

**A:** All of the funds will be awarded to support the region, but the applicant must be able to clearly track and verify that the funds allocated for the various localities in the region are being expended to provide services and support to those localities. A lead agency could not pool all of the funds and reallocate the funding along different lines that might leave a shortage or lack of service in one or more localities.

**Q:** *Will the manager and specialists be written into the ABE grant or funded separately?*

**A:** We are working on the RFP now, so I don't have all of the details of what it will look like, but I can say that we are writing a unified application with the intent that one application will be used to apply for all funds, except for the EL-Civics funds, which will still be handled through a separate application.

**Q:** *In the three-year plan, do we speak to all three years? Or do we make a three year plan and then one year application within that plan?*

**A:** The three-year plan will address activities that will be undertaken year by year to address specific goals and objectives. The one-year application for funding and the annual budget documents will explain what the funds will be expended for in the fiscal year with respect to salaries, instructional activities, outreach and recruitment, materials and supplies, and the like. The three-year plan will address long term goals and objectives; the one-year application for funding will address what exactly will be done in that year to reach the three-year goals.

**Q:** *What are the page lengths of the narrative?*

**A:** That isn't known at this point. We are in the process of writing the RFP. Page limitations, formatting requirements, and submission guidelines will be included in the RFP when it is released.

**Q:** *Will there be an increase in funds for the program manger and specialist grants?*

**A:** We do not expect that the total funding available for these positions will be increased by the General Assembly. But we do expect to revise how those funds are allocated per region so that they are more equitably distributed throughout Virginia.

**Q:** *When will the funding formula and amount of available funds be determined and announced?*

**A:** We are working on that now, and the funding levels and allocations will be included in the RFP. We do not expect any significant changes in the allocations of the federal ABE funds. As stated in the earlier question, we will ensure that the funds to support regional managers and specialists are distributed to support positions statewide. GAE allocations will remain the same. Race to GED funds will be accessed through the unified application rather than competed independently as in the past. Likely, those funds will be allocated per region.

**Q:** *Going to twenty-two regions, where is the additional funding for full-time RPM and RAS positions coming from? Is there a set amount determined for each position?*

**A:** There is no additional state funding available from the General Assembly for these positions. Rather, the state funds will be reallocated, and the applicants will be expected to use the state, federal, and local funds to support these positions. We cannot set salary



levels for these positions; those levels will be based on the lead agency's human resources and compensation policies and procedures.

**Q:** *What year of the American Community Survey will be used in the ABE allocation formula?*

**A:** We are in discussions with the U.S. Department of Education about whether to use the same data set that they use to make their awards to the states, which is the three-year ACS data, or the more current five-year data. We do not have a decision as to that matter yet.

**Q:** *Can there be two fiscal agents in one region? It is a burden for one county to cover the upfront costs before reimbursements are received.*

**A:** Under this approach, there would be only one fiscal agent per region, but that fiscal agent could rely on multiple providers and reimburse expenditures throughout the region as funds are drawn down from VDOE, so that the lead agency would not have to cover expenditures for the entire region.

**Q:** *What is the advantage to a school district to take on the additional work? What is plan B if no one applies?*

**A:** We don't presume to know the reasons why a school district, a CBLO, a public library, a community college, or any other eligible applicant would choose to serve as a lead agency. If we receive no applicants in a region, or no application that scores highly enough to be funded, we may run another competition in that region or negotiate with another funded applicant to provide service in that region. Those decisions will be made based on the outcomes of the competition. Again, the funding is not allocated to the school divisions; it is allocated to the localities based on the need for adult education and literacy services in those localities.

**Q:** *Will 2010-2011 NRS performance for areas be available for new applicants?*

**A:** All performance for 2010-2011 will be finalized in December of this year, and that information will be included in the aggregate for the Commonwealth as a whole in OAEL's annual report to the United State Department of Education, which is public information that will be posted on our Web site. Performance for individual localities is public information and can be requested.

**Q:** *Is it possible to request a letter of intent for transparency from potential applicants? Then, invite selected entities to apply. Encourage entities within a locality to work together.*

**A:** Yes, we are considering requiring such a letter of intent. However, we will not issue invitations to selected entities. This is not allowed under the legislation. All eligible applicants are invited to apply and may apply for the funding.

**Q:** *What source are you using to determine the twenty-two planning districts? Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions shows twenty-three.*

**A:** We are using the original twenty-two planning district commissions. Currently there are twenty-one, because in 1990, two districts merged and formed a new district, which is numbered twenty-three.

**Q:** *Even though funding will not be received until after July 1, 2012, when will applicants be notified as to whether or not their proposal was accepted?*

**A:** Applicants will be notified as soon as possible after the competition is complete and the Virginia Department of Education has received its federal notice of award. Regional awards cannot be issued until VDOE receives its federal award. We hope to be able to notify all successful applicants soon after July 1, 2012.

**Q:** *If an entity/entities in a region decide to opt out of participation in a proposal for ABE funds, are the partnering entities in the proposal for that region responsible for establishing and providing services to cover the area that opts out? For example, if school division A, school division B, and school division D partner to put forward a proposal to serve region X, but school division C decides to opt out, are divisions A, B, and D responsible for planning and implementing sites/instruction to serve school division C clients/geographic area?*

**A:** School divisions are one of several eligible applicants. Eligible applicants will apply for all eligible funding in a region to provide services to the region as a whole. If a consortium is formed to apply for funding, one eligible applicant will need to serve as the lead agency, and other entities may provide services on behalf of the consortia. Who provides what services where in the region are decisions that will have to be made by the members of the consortia. Alternatively, an individual entity may apply for all of the funding in the region if it wishes to do so. To be competitive, all applicants will have to clearly and compellingly explain how they will be able to successfully address the need for adult education and literacy services within the region and comply with all aspects of federal and state law and OAEL policy. So in the example in the question above, school division C can participate in the partnership or not, and it can apply for the funds or not. But all applicants will need to apply to serve the region.